

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) In an automatic call distribution system adapted to connect a telephone call of a caller to one of a plurality of agents located at an agent station through a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a method of repopulating call information identifiers received from the PSTN, the method comprising the steps of:

- receiving the incoming telephone call from the PSTN;
- transferring the incoming call to a voice response unit (VRU);
- requesting, by the VRU, predetermined data from the caller;
- receiving, by the VRU, the requested predetermined data;
- overwriting at least a portion of the call information identifiers with transactional data corresponding to the caller, said transactional data defining repopulated data;
- selecting an agent of the plurality of agents to handle the telephone call based upon a business reason derived from the received predetermined data ~~while the telephone call resides within the VRU;~~
- the VRU transferring the incoming telephone call back to the automatic call distribution system from the VRU along with the repopulated data retained within the call information identifiers by dialing a telephone number of the selected agent or selected agent group using a hook transfer type of operation;
- routing the transferred call to the agent station of the selected agent; and
- displaying the repopulated data.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU is separate from the automatic call distribution system.

3. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU communicates with the automatic call distribution system through the PSTN.

4. (original) The method according to claim 1 further including a host processor operatively coupled to the VRU.

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 further including a database operatively accessible by the VRU.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU is

programmable so that the transactional data requested of the caller is capable of being modified.

7. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU is interactive.

8. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU is interactive and requests the transactional data from the caller.

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 8 wherein the caller provides the transactional data in response to the request by using a touch-tone keypad.

10. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the transactional data is selected from the group consisting of account number, credit card number, social security number, name and address.

11. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the VRU is operatively coupled to a voice recognition system.

12. (currently amended) The method according to claim ~~11~~1 wherein the voice recognition system is configured to obtain at least one of a name and address spoken by caller call information identifiers are stored prior to overwriting.

13. (previously presented) The method according to claim 12 wherein the voice recognition system is configured to convert the at least one of the name and the address into digital data, said digital data corresponding to the transactional data.

14. (original) The method according to claim 1 wherein the call information identifiers include at least one of an ANI (automatic number identification) field and a DNIS (dialed number information service) field.

15. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein a length of the transactional data provided by the caller is less than a length of the call information identifiers such that all of the transactional data is received within the call information identifiers.

16. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein if the transactional data provided by the caller exceeds a storage capacity of the call information identifiers, the repopulated data is in the form of a customer record key corresponding to the transactional data.

17. (original) The method according to claim 16 further including a host processor operatively coupled to the VRU, the host processor providing the VRU with the customer record key.

18. (original) The method according to claim 17 further including a database accessible by

the host processor.

19. (original) The method according to claim 16 wherein the repopulated data in the form of the customer record key provided to the agent station permits the agent station to access customer data corresponding to the customer.

20. (previously presented) In an automatic call distribution system adapted to connect a telephone call of a caller to one of a plurality of agents located at an agent station through a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a method of repopulating call information identifiers received from the PSTN, the method comprising the steps of:

- receiving the incoming telephone call from the PSTN;
- transferring the incoming call to a voice response unit (VRU);
- requesting, by the VRU, transactional data from the caller;
- receiving, by the VRU, the requested transactional data;
- overwriting at least a portion of the call information identifiers with transactional data, said transactional data defining repopulated data;
- providing the transactional data to a database to identify customer data corresponding to the caller;
- identifying from the customer data a preferred agent of the plurality of agents located at a station of the preferred agent based upon a business reason derived from the requested transactional data;
- transferring the incoming telephone call from the VRU to the identified preferred agent station of the automatic call distribution system by dialing a telephone number of the preferred agent or preferred agent group using a hook-transfer type of operation, the repopulated data retained within the call information identifiers; and
- displaying the repopulated data.

21. (original) The method according to claim 20 further including a host processor operatively coupled to the VRU.

22. (original) The method according to claim 20 wherein the VRU is interactive and requests the predetermined data from the caller.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 20 wherein the transactional

data is selected from the group consisting of account number, credit card number, social security number, name and address.

24. (original) The method according to claim 20 wherein the VRU is operatively coupled to a voice recognition system.

25. (previously presented) The method according to claim 20 wherein if the transactional data provided by the caller exceeds a storage capacity of the call information identifiers, the repopulated data is in the form of a customer record key corresponding the transactional data.

26. (original) The method according to claim 25 further including a host processor operatively coupled to the VRU, the host processor providing the VRU with the customer record key.

27. (original) The method according to claim 26 further including a database accessible by the host processor.

28. (original) The method according to claim 25 wherein the repopulated data in the form of the customer record key provided to the agent station permits the agent station to access customer data corresponding to the customer.

29. (currently amended) An automatic call distribution system adapted to connect an incoming telephone call of a caller to one of a plurality of agents located at an agent station through a public switched telephone network (PSTN), the PSTN providing call information identifiers corresponding the incoming telephone call, the system comprising:

an transaction processor configured to receive the incoming telephone call from the PSTN;
a voice response unit (VRU) ~~accessible to~~accessed and controlled by the transaction processor through the PSTN, the transaction processor transferring the incoming telephone call to the VRU;

the VRU requesting and obtaining transactional data from the caller and overwriting at least a portion of the call information identifiers with repopulated data corresponding to the transactional data, said data defining repopulated data;

a host processor that receives the obtained transactional data from the VRU, that selects an agent of the plurality of agents ~~based upon a business reason derived from the obtained transactional data~~ and that transfers a telephone number of the selected agent or selected agent group to the VRU;

the VRU transferring the incoming telephone call back to the transaction processor ~~by dialing~~

~~the selected agent or selected agent group telephone number using a hook transfer type of operation~~
such that the repopulated data is retained within the call information identifiers; and

the transaction processor routing the transferred call to the agent station such that the repopulated data is provided to the agent station.

30. (original) The system according to claim 29 further including a host processor operatively coupled to the VRU.

31. (previously presented) The system according to claim 29 wherein the VRU is interactive and requests the transactional data from the caller.

32. (previously presented) The system according to claim 29 wherein the transactional data is selected from the group consisting of account number, credit card number, social security number, name and address.

33. (original) The system according to claim 29 wherein the VRU is operatively coupled to a voice recognition system.

34. (previously presented) The system according to claim 29 wherein if the transactional data provided by the caller exceeds a storage capacity of the call information identifiers, the repopulated data is in the form of a customer record key corresponding to the transactional data.

35. (previously presented) The system according to claim 34 further including the host processor operatively coupled to the VRU, the host processor providing the VRU with the customer record key.

36. (original) The system according to claim 35 further including a database accessible by the host processor.

37. (original) The system according to claim 34 wherein the repopulated data in the form of the customer record key provided to the agent station permits the agent station to access customer data corresponding to the customer.

38. (previously presented) In an automatic call distribution system adapted to connect a telephone call of a caller to one of a plurality of agents located at an agent station through a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a method of repopulating call information identifiers received from the PSTN, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the incoming telephone call from the PSTN;

transferring the incoming call from the automatic call distribution system;
obtaining transactional data relating to the telephone call;
selecting an agent of the plurality of agents for handling the call based upon a business reason derived from the obtained transactional data;
overwriting at least a portion of the call information identifiers with repopulated data corresponding to the transactional data;
dialing a telephone number of the selected agent or selected agent group and transferring the incoming telephone call back to the automatic call distribution system along with the repopulated data retained within the call information identifiers using a hook transfer type of operation;
routing the transferred call to the selected agent located at an agent station of the selected agent; and
displaying the repopulated data on the agent station.

39. (previously presented) In an automatic call distribution system adapted to connect a telephone call of a caller to one of a plurality of agents located at an agent station through a public switched telephone network (PSTN), a method of repopulating call information identifiers received from the PSTN, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the incoming telephone call from the PSTN;
transferring the incoming call from the automatic call distribution system;
means for obtaining transactional data relating to the telephone call;
means for selecting an agent of the plurality of agents for handling the call based upon a business reason derived from the obtained transactional data;
means for overwriting at least a portion of the call information identifiers with repopulated data corresponding to the transactional data, said data defining repopulated data;
means for dialing a telephone number of the selected agent or selected agent group and transferring the incoming telephone call back to the automatic call distribution system along with the repopulated data retained within the call information identifiers using a hook transfer operation;
routing the transferred call to the selected agent located at an agent station of the selected agent; and
displaying the repopulated data on the agent station.